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RHEBAAA/DEPT OF ENERGY WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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SUBJECT: NIGERIAN NUGGETS -- SEPTEMBER 24, 2009

11. (U) Mission Nigeria provides the following compilation of recent political, economic, and social developments not reported previously.

DUTCH DELIVER DIGITAL EVIDENCE TRAINING

12. (U) Law enforcement and legal experts from the Netherlands trained Nigerian police, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and jurists in collecting, authenticating, and using digital evidence in court under a Dutch-Nigerian cooperative agreement on identifying trafficked victims and prosecuting criminals. The National Agency for the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) had organized the class to support the need for improved evidence techniques. While Nigerian law does not currently allow use of digital information (photographs, electronic-mail messages, on-line bank statements, and so forth) as evidence in courts, Justice Minister and Attorney General Michael Aondoakaa pledged at the opening ceremony to reform evidence rules on digital materials to meet changes in the global economy. Aondoakaa said he would seek help from western countries, including the U.S., to support additional training of Nigerian Police Forces. Dutch Ambassador to Nigeria A. C Van der Wiel reported that Dutch police had recently published a book on "419 scams" (fraud) in Nigeria to be translated into English and shared with Nigerian police.

USAID AGRICULTURE TRANSFORMATION PROGRAM DRAFT

13. (U) On September 21, U.S. Agency for International Development USAID - Nigeria submitted a draft implementation plan for a 34.25-million dollar Agriculture Transformation Program (ATP) using fiscal-year 2010 Food Security, trade, child survival, and PEPFAR funding. The ATP implementation plan, encompassing the next phase of the inter-agency Global Food Security Response Program, seeks to increase agriculture-sector growth, leading to higher incomes, improved nutrition, and reduced hunger and poverty for one million Nigerians living below the poverty line. The project will seek to improve the well-being of ten million Nigerians over four years under a significantly expanded program supporting Nigeria's Comprehensive African Agriculture

Development Program. During ATP implementation, USAID will collaborate with GON agricultural development programs and development partners, including the World Bank, African Development Bank, U.K. Department for International Development (DFID), and Canadian International Development Agency.

AFRICA AGRICULTURE DONORS

¶4. (U) USAID re-convened (and will initially lead) the Agriculture Donors Working Group (ADWG) to discuss major agricultural policies and issues with GON leaders, coordinate donor support for implementing the Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Program, and improve overall coordination. Other ADWG participants include the World Bank, African Development Bank, and DFID. The Food and Agriculture Organization has agreed to join the group, which will also invite others, including Canadian and Japanese development agencies.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION BILL

¶5. (U) Over 60 Muslim groups and leaders pledged support for Nigeria's Freedom of Information (FOI) bill, in an unprecedented show of support by an Islamic constituency for FOI reform. With USAID help under a Pact grant, the Muslim League for Accountability (MULAC) (a national network of

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Islamic organizations that champions transparency and accountability) conducted a workshop September 9 to 10 in Abuja to sensitize civil society representatives in Nigeria's Islamic North on the bill's importance and to garner support.

Participants included groups involving youth, women, and persons with disabilities from several northern states. The National Television Authority (NTA) and Kaduna's private TV station DITV provided coverage in English and Hausa. Prospects for this FOI bill, which the National Assembly approved in March, but then President Obasanjo did not sign, should improve with this support from northern civil society organizations.

VIRGIN NIGERIA RE-BRANDS AS NIGERIAN EAGLE

¶6. (U) Virgin Nigeria Airlines (VNA) Managing Director Captain Dapo Olumide announced September 17 that his company would immediately operate under the name Nigerian Eagle Airlines. He revealed the new name and logo at a press conference in Lagos at which he outlined plans to raise funds through private placements in capital markets. When VNA began in 2004, the UK's Virgin Atlantic Limited held 49 percent of the shares and Nigerian institutional investors the remaining 51 percent. Virgin Nigeria subsequently ran up a commercial debt of 228 million dollars and unpaid royalties of 11 million dollars. In June, Virgin Atlantic announced divestment of shares in Virgin Nigeria, ordering the airline to stop using the Virgin brand.

SUB-NATIONAL BONDS SET NIGERIA APART IN AFRICA

¶7. (U) The Infrastructure Concession Regulatory Commission (ICRC) and the World Bank held a financial sector roundtable September 18 to discuss "The Financial Appetite for Public Private Partnership (PPP) Infrastructure Financing in the Wake of Global Recession." The World Bank's Peter Mousley said the successful issuance of sub-national bonds for infrastructure development sets Nigeria apart from other African countries. He commended Lagos, Kwara, and Imo states

for packaging attractive fixed rate bonds that hedged against economic and political risks. Mousley claimed that borrowing through bonds provided a savings of four to seven percent for states over borrowing from commercial banks. He predicted external debts and equity would remain the primary sources for PPP infrastructure financing in the near term. He urged governments, however, to create Viability Gap Funds as a cushion for PPP investors.

PRISTINE WATER FROM SOLAR-POWERED WATER PUMP

18. (U) Water flowed for the first time September 17 from a solar-powered, 900-foot well in Kaima, Bayelsa State. The Niger Delta Wetlands Center (NDWC), an NGO dedicated to pioneering sustainable development through renewable energy technology, won one of 25 Niger Delta Development Corporation Qtechnology, won one of 25 Niger Delta Development Corporation (NDDC) contracts to provide drinking water from solar-powered pumps. NDWC personnel dug their well to a depth of 900 feet to access pristine, drinking-quality water -- unlike most wells in the Niger Delta dug to less than 100 feet and yielding only brackish, often contaminated, water. Given that the well and its associated 20,000-liter storage tank met at most ten percent of the community's water needs, NDWC Executive Director Miriam Forbes Isoun asked inhabitants to reserve the new well for drinking water while using existing, shallow wells for other uses. Isoun claimed that, due to inexperience, none of the other contractors engaged by NDDC to build solar-power wells had yet to meet with success.

ASSISTANCE REQUESTED BY OIL SPILL AGENCY

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19. (SBU) During a September 15 meeting with the Nigerian Oil Spills Detection and Response Agency (NOSDRA), visiting State Department Nigeria Deputy Desk Officer, Economic Associate, and Economic Specialist inquired about the agency's mandates and vision. NOSDRA Director General and Chief Executive Officer B. A. Ajakaiye described his agency as a young para-statal under the Environment Ministry with responsibility to monitor, detect, and respond to oil spills.

Praising past U.S. capacity-building help through the Science Fellow program, Ajakaiye requested additional assistance to strengthen the agency's early warning and emergency preparedness capabilities. After 50 years of oil exploitation and neglect, he noted that the Delta region suffered from extensive oil pollution that severely affected the region's inhabitants. He said NOSDRA, as a new organization (established in 2006), lacked capacity to address these challenges. The Mission, which provided technical training for agency staff through the Science Fellow Program in early 2009, is arranging a Voluntary Visitors' program for NOSDRA management and National Assembly members with oversight responsibilities to acquaint them with a comprehensive early warning and crisis management system to manage oil spills and hazardous waste.

NIGERIAN POSITION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

110. (SBU) During a September 18 visit to the Environment Ministry's Climate Change Unit, visiting State Department Nigeria Deputy Desk Officer, Economic Associate, and Economic Specialist inquired about Nigeria's response to climate change and its preparations for the December 2009 Copenhagen United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Unit Head Victor Fodeke said Nigeria's position would coincide with Africa's position towards climate change, which calls upon developed countries to provide significant financial and technical help to developing countries to

mitigate and adapt to climate change. Asserting that developing countries were not responsible for the effects of climate change, but remained the most vulnerable to its impact, Fodeke expressed interest in acquiring clean energy technology from the developed world, especially to address gas flaring. Pointing out Nigeria's potential for clean development projects, he mentioned interest by countries such as China, India, and Israel in supporting clean development initiatives in Nigeria. He requested U.S. technical assistance in conducting a feasibility study to assess opportunities for deploying clean development technologies in Nigeria as well as U.S. support for Africa's position at the upcoming UNFCCC summit.

¶11. (U) Embassy and Consulate General Lagos collaborated on this telegram.
SANDERS